Recommendations of CACP for MSP

794. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any recommendations from the CACP to increase the Minimum Support Price of paddy, sugarcane, cotton and groundnut;

(b) if so, whether the said recommendations have been accepted by Government;

(c) by when the same are likely to be implemented;

(d) if not, the reasons for non-acceptance of the recommendations;

(e) whether Government has to bear any additional burden for the purpose; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (f) The Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP) has submitted its Report on Price Policy for Kharif Crops and Sugarcane of 2008-09 season to the Government. Final decision regarding the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for the Kharif crops and Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane of 2008-09 season will be taken by the Government after obtaining the views of State Governments/UTs and Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors which are considered important for fixation of support prices. The financial implications of any decision regarding MSP will be worked out by the Department of Food and Public Distribution under whom Food Corporation of India (FCI) functions.

Suicides of farmers in Uttar Pradesh

795. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are reports of drought in some parts of Uttar Pradesh with farmers committing suicide;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that relief provided so far is meager and has not ameliorated the conditions of farmers there;

(d) the steps Government is contemplating to provide further relief particularly in areas like Bundelkhand; and

(e) whether there are any plans to introduce crop insurance in such areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) This year, the Government of Uttar Pradesh have reported drought in parts of the State. However, no report on suicides by farmers in the context of drought has been received from the State Government.

(c) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to take necessary measures in the wake of natural Calamities including drought. There is ready availability of funds with the State Government in the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for taking such measures. No Memorandum has so far been received from the State Government for assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) etc. for the current drought.

(d) An Inter-Ministerial Central Team visited the Bundelkhand areas and some tehsils in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh in the 4th week of January, 2008, to study the drought like situation in these areas with a view to assessing the ground situation and the scale of implementation of various medium-term and long-term drought mitigation programmes/ schemes and to recommend strategy and various measures that are required for agriculture development suitable for the areas to ameliorate the current situation. Further action would be taken after receipt of the Team's report.

(e) National Agricultural Insurance Scheme is applicable in Uttar Pradesh, including Bundelkhand areas. However, crops/areas to be covered are notified by the State Government.

Justifiable prices for agricultural produce

†796. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that how to get farmers justifiable prices for their produce, is not a matter of priority for Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite all Government announcements/packages farmer suicides continue unabated; and

(c) if not, the details of efforts and achievements made by Government in getting farmers lucrative price for their produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Government's price policy for agricultural commodities seeks to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce with a view to encourage higher investment and production, and to safeguard the interest of consumers by making available supplies at reasonable prices. The price policy also seeks to evolve a balanced and integrated price structure in the perspective of the overall needs of the economy.

The Government decides on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of State Governments and Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors which are considered important for fixation of support prices. The CACP, while formulating its recommendations on price policy considers a number of important factors which includes cost of production.

The causes for suicide by farmers, as reported by the State Governments, are broadly crop failure, indebtendness, drought, social and economic insecurity. The Government being sensitive to the difficulties of the farming community, the Union Budget for 2008-09 has proposed, especially for the small and marginal farmers, a scheme of debt waiver and debt relief.

Unending farm tragedy

797. PROF. M.S. SWAMINATHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.